

NSW Vulnerable Persons Food Safety Scheme Consultative Committee

Wednesday 12 December 2012

Summary of meeting outcomes

The NSW Vulnerable Persons Food Safety Scheme Consultative Committee held its fifth meeting in Sydney on Wednesday 12 December 2012. Specific issues considered by the Committee at its meeting are detailed below.

Food safety program compliance report (2011–12)

The Authority provided an update on the compliance, enforcement and inspection activities during the period 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012. This included a breakdown on total audits and inspections conducted and percentage of critical CARS (corrective action requests) issued by category, VP sector audit results and reasons for audit failures, and enforcement activities.

The Authority congratulated the sector on the excellent results during the period with only an 8.1% failure rate from the first round of audits conducted. Out of these only two businesses had failed follow-up audits. Generally main areas of non-compliance are with the documented food safety program and process control.

The Authority advised that its auditors will be transitioning to the use of new technology tools (iPads) for auditing next year. It is expected that this new technology will assist greatly in improving the audit process, consistency and interpretation and enable facilities to receive electronic reports on the day of audit.

The Committee noted the compliance report and were invited to provide feedback and suggestions for information they would like to have presented in future reports.

Action list items—previous meeting 24 April 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 24 April 2012 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

- **Food storage in hospital day rooms**

A paper in relation to the storage of potentially hazardous foods in hospital wards and day operation rooms was tabled for discussion. Members noted relevant excerpts from the Authority's Guidelines for Food Service to Vulnerable Persons and compliance methods utilised by HealthShare which have been passed on to the Authority's auditors and third party staff.

Discussions were held on the difficulties being encountered in terms of monitoring compliance in clinics or other areas in hospitals outside of their direct control and where the responsibility for management falls upon the clinic or nursing staff. The Authority stressed the importance for facilities to have a procedure that demonstrates to an auditor that appropriate food safety measures and controls are in place for the areas they do control; it is recognised that it is not always possible to monitor areas that are out of the scope of the facility's control.

Members noted the guidelines and agreed that it would be useful to circulate these to their associations.

- **Data loggers**

Following a question raised at the previous meeting on the use of data loggers, a paper was tabled providing further information on how facilities can utilise these for recording temperature information. The Authority indicated it will accept the use of these devices provided they are

operated and calibrated correctly. Members stressed it is important that people using data loggers use the data they provide for corrective action.

The committee noted the paper and supports the use of data loggers within vulnerable persons food safety programs.

Case study on *Listeria*-contaminated meat in aged, hospital setting

Members noted a report on the outcomes of a case of listeria contaminated meat. This paper was tabled to reinforce the importance of following the Authority's Vulnerable Persons Guidelines in terms of programs for high risk foods, particularly smallgoods, and of sourcing smallgoods products from licensed operators.

Milk rooms in hospital settings

A paper in relation to compliance arrangements for formula and milk rooms at hospitals under the VP Food Safety Scheme was tabled. The Committee endorsed the following recommendations:

- The Committee note that existing NSW Health policies provide an equivalent outcome to the requirements for formula and milk rooms under the Food Standards Code.
- The Committee note that the existing NSW Health internal and external audit arrangements provide sufficient compliance checks of milk/formula rooms.
- The Committee note the removal of the auditing of milk/formula rooms from the NSW Food Authority audit program where these policies and audit procedures are in place.
- The Committee note that these changes will be communicated to the sector through the VP Consultative Committee, on the Authority website and by circular to licensees.

IPART licensing review

The Committee noted an information paper regarding a review currently underway by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) of all licences in NSW. IPART is seeking information on licences that are unnecessary, have excessive requirements or are poorly administered in NSW. All of the Authority's industry committees have been made aware of this review and the 12 December 2012 closing date for submissions.

The next meeting of the MICC will be held on 26 June 2013.